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Our history

“A dream is one thing. A realization is something entirely separate.”

-Danny Thomas, founder of St Jude Children's Research Hospital

Video: The founding of St. Jude



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Why Danny Thomas opened St. Jude

More than 70 years ago, [Danny Thomas](#) was a young entertainer with a baby on the way. Work wasn't easy to come by, and his despair grew. He turned to St. Jude Thaddeus, the patron saint of hopeless causes, and vowed:

“

Show me my way in life, and I will build you a shrine.

”

That prayer marked a pivotal moment. Soon after, he began finding work, eventually becoming one of the biggest stars of radio, film and television in his day. He was on *Make Room for Daddy*, later known as *The Danny Thomas Show*.

Danny used his fame to fulfill his vow and to change the lives of thousands of children and families. In 1962, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital opened in front of a crowd of 9,000 in Memphis, Tenn.

Historical milestones

1966

A group of St. Jude patients are the **first acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) patients to ever be successfully taken off therapy**, based on evidence that remission can be sustained.

1977

The hospital launches the first major effort to **understand the lifelong progression of sickle cell disease**.

1984

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1996

Peter Doherty, PhD, St. Jude Immunology chair, is awarded the **Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine**.

2006

St. Jude reports a **94% survival rate for patients with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL)**, using therapy that does not include radiation.

2007

The **St. Jude LIFE study** begins to study the long-term effects of cancer and its treatment. This initiative is one of the most ambitious follow-up projects ever conceived.

2008

St. Jude is designated a **National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center**. We're the first and only cancer center solely focused on pediatric cancer to receive this distinction.

2010

We launch the **Pediatric Cancer Genome Project**, a collaboration with Washington University to uncover why childhood cancer arises, spreads and resists treatment. As part of the world's largest such initiative, scientists **compare the complete normal and cancer genomes of 800 childhood cancer patients** with some of the toughest and least understood pediatric cancers.

2018

St. Jude and World Health Organization announce a **five-year collaboration to transform cancer care by curing at least 60% of children** with six of the most common kinds of cancer worldwide by 2030.

2019

St. Jude announces a cure for SCID-X1, commonly known as bubble boy disease.

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Continue exploring our history



[Pioneering racial integration](#)

St. Jude was the first integrated children's hospital in the South.



[Honors and awards](#)

We've won clinical and scientific achievements.



[St. Jude CEOs](#)

Learn about our CEOs since 1961.

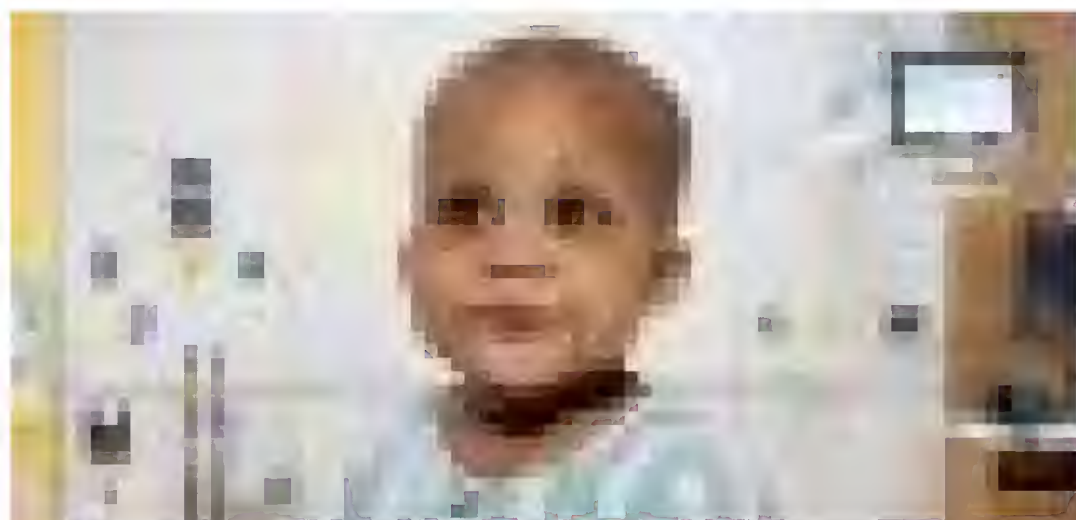
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[How we began](#)

Continue reading about our history.

Because of supporters like you, families never receive a bill from St. Jude for anything.



*St. Jude patient **Sparrow***

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